



THE RELAW PROGRAM

REVITALIZING INDIGENOUS LAW
FOR
LAND, AIR AND WATER

RELAW 2025-26 Co-learning Program

About RELAW Retreats

At West Coast Environmental Law, the Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air and Water (RELAW) Program facilitates an annual Co-learning Program consisting of three retreats:

- 1) RELAW Retreat 1: Indigenous Law in Story (November 24-27, 2025)
- 2) RELAW Retreat 2: Indigenous Law in Dialogue (February 18-20, 2026 – online ½ days)
- 3) RELAW Retreat 3: Indigenous Law in Action (June 1-4, 2026)

The first and third retreat will be in-person for 3 nights and 4 days at selected retreat centres in BC with access to land-based learning opportunities, while the second retreat will take place over three half days online. There will be approximately 20-30 participants in this year's RELAW "cohort."

Participants will learn about approaches to researching, applying and enforcing Indigenous law through a story-based approach. Participants will have the opportunity to:

- engage with their nation's own laws and protocols through stories (published or through oral histories),
- explore how these stories can shape community decision-making processes, and
- learn about approaches to putting Indigenous law into action.

Participants will hear from local Elders and knowledge carriers and learn from RELAW partners who are working to uphold Indigenous law in the work they do. Current RELAW partners are working in the fields of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), fisheries governance, watershed management, environmental assessment and various other spheres of Indigenous law and community engagement work.

This is an opportunity to build a supportive network with one another and share knowledge of best practices.

In-person Retreats

Join us in

RELAW's Co-learning Program Cohort of 2025-26

Each RELAW retreat will bring together co-learning participants, including representatives of the Indigenous nations of whose land we are guests, RELAW lawyers and other knowledge holders at a select retreat centre with access to outdoor cultural activities.

Retreat 1: Indigenous Law in Story

November 24-27, 2025

In-person at [Manning Park Resort](#)

Manning Park Resort is in the North Cascade Mountains, the area is known as saʔtikn in the nsyilxcən language. It encompasses the headwaters of the Similkameen and Tulameen Rivers and connects several Indigenous peoples, including the sməlqmíx / syilx, Nlakaʼpamux, Upper Skagit and Stó:lō.

Hosted by RELAW and RELAW partner(s)

Retreat 1 is focused on establishing safe spaces and relationships. We will spend time with the RELAW Lens, learning about the RELAW approach, with time for participants to share, if they choose to do so, their current work/projects (at whatever stage they're in). Participants will discuss the role of story and how it encompasses the legal orders of Indigenous nations, with a workshop for engaging with the teachings found in story, an approach developed by the Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) at the University of Victoria. There will be time for optional cultural activities, trauma-informed practices, rest and relaxation.

Retreat 2: Indigenous Law in Dialogue

February 18-20, 2026

Location: Half days online

Hosted by [Sacred Matriarch](#)

Retreat 2 builds on the first retreat to discuss what stories teach us about processes and procedures for decision-making, and who needs to be involved. RELAW partners and participants will share stories and best practices of real-life examples of dialogue, deliberation and engagement in their community. Dialogue with Elders, knowledge holders and community members is an essential part of the “work” of Indigenous law. We will learn about ways to host healthy dialogue in community from a trauma-informed approach, with teachings from past and present RELAW community partners. Sacred Matriarch and RELAW will guide participants through planning and designing process for community engagement.

Retreat 3: Indigenous Law in Action

June 1-4, 2026

In-person at [Loon Lake Lodge](#)

Loon Lake Lodge & Retreat Centre is located on [Katzie “q̓ičəy – ...land of the moss” territory](#), located in scenic Maple Ridge, BC, approximately one hour east of Downtown Vancouver.

Hosted by West Coast and RELAW partner(s)

On the land, in the courts, and in the boardroom, Indigenous nations are implementing and enforcing their laws. In Retreat 3 participants will explore ways to best apply the concepts learned through the RELAW approach in the work they do and discuss any opportunities and barriers that might exist within the colonial system to being able to do that work effectively and impactfully. RELAW partners will share strategies on how they can enforce their laws. To conclude our time spent with one another over the span of the year, we will ensure that cultural land-based activities are factored into the time spent together that are centered on healing and guidance for the path ahead in each other's unique journeys.

